

# **“TechWay” Scheme Makes No Sense for Commuters, Business, Neighborhoods**

*by Montgomery County Councilmember Nancy Dacek  
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Traffic congestion in the metropolitan Washington area is a real problem for many families and businesses throughout the region. We all know that.

But it's pretty clear that the “Techway” is a classic case of the more you know, the more you see it's a bad idea – bad for commuters, bad for business, and bad for neighborhoods.

And studies from both sides of the river show that it will do, at best, very little to relieve traffic congestion – even in the short term.

Is it any wonder that public support for it is dropping like a stone – on both sides of the river?

Ask Virginia Congressman Frank Wolf, formerly a chief booster, who has taken another look and changed sides to oppose the project.

“I have come to the conclusion that it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to build a new bridge without negatively impacting established neighborhoods or cutting through parkland,” he said. “I thought perhaps there was still enough open space on both sides of the river...but ... that does not appear to be the case.”

The proposed second Potomac River crossing would either slash through Montgomery County's nationally acclaimed agricultural reserve or destroy hundreds of homes in densely populated areas. It would violate 30 years of County Master Plans, formulated after Virginia took the lead and removed any bridge from its master plans in the 1970s.

Montgomery County took the lead in the metropolitan area by assembling our 90,000-acre “crown jewel” agricultural reserve. The six-lane, 200 yard-wide “Techway” would slash through this green space and no amount of landscaping and vague and changeable promises of “parkways with no exits” are going to change that reality.

And there's more.

The County's own “Commission on the Future” report – which put economic development first and foremost as a County goal – voiced opposition to the

project. “A second bridge would not only impact the County’s land use and open space policies but could also have a negative impact on the County’s job growth and economic development initiatives,” said the report.

And one shouldn’t be fooled by the “techway” name. This is more about trucks than tech. Much of the impetus behind this has to do with the movement of freight from Dulles.

The big losers would be Montgomery County business, a BWI airport in which Marylanders have invested billions, and – ultimately – the commuters swamped by sprawl-driven congestion.

It is not surprising that the entire Montgomery County Council – liberals and conservatives, Democrats and Republicans, ICC proponents and ICC opponents – oppose the bridge and highway, joined by County Executive Doug Duncan and the state of Maryland.

**In a recent poll, Montgomery residents chose building transit over roads by 52 percent to 32 percent. A poll of Virginians showed 70 percent favored managing new growth with existing roads and mass transit as opposed to only 24 percent who favored building more roads.**

Rather than focusing on a bridge that’s never going to happen, let’s roll up our collective sleeves and push forward real solutions to congestion and sprawl.

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